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Road Connects Remote Villages

Improved road reduces travel time and opens new markets in Kandahar province



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District Governor Hajji Abdul Ghani (second from left) and elders from three area villages inaugurate the opening of the Robat Road with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in Spin Boldak District.

A cash-for-work road project by USAID is connecting remote villages in volatile Kandahar Province.

Hajji Abdul Ghani remembers when the 28 kilometer journey to the end of Robat Road took two hours. The district governor of Spin Boldak is a melon farmer who found it increasingly difficult to get his produce to the markets in Kandahar City and the Afghan-Pakistan border. Seasonal rains and floods left deep craters in the dirt road, rendering it inaccessible to large trucks.

“When it rained, the potholes turned into lakes,” he recalls. “Sometimes we avoided the road altogether and drove through the fields.”

Now, with the completion of a road rehabilitation project by USAID, the two-hour journey takes less than half an hour. The new road, made of compacted clay and gravel, connects three remote villages in the area and provides access to nomadic Kuchi villages lying beyond the end of the road.

Ease of transportation means greater market access for the grain and vegetable farmers living along the road. It also means improved access to schools and hospitals in the nearby town of Spin Boldak. New drainage features such as concrete culverts and bridges will prevent erosion, providing a smooth ride for years to come.

The road is expected to have a significant economic impact not only on villages in the immediate environs but among Kuchi livestock farmers in the surrounding desert who depend on trade with local villages for their livelihood. The Kuchis provide valuable meat and dairy products to residents of this remote desert region.

The construction was accomplished through Afghan contractors employing Afghan workers. The project provided jobs to more than 200 local villagers who were selected by local shuras working with the district governor, forging a stronger link between the villagers and their local government.

At the inauguration ceremony, Hajji Abdul Ghani and village elders noted that improved transportation was vital for maintaining security in this volatile district. “When farmers can’t get their crops to market, it makes them vulnerable. Prosperity and security go hand in hand.”